

(517) 487-5966
FAX (517) 487-5213



Michigan State AFL-CIO

419 Washington Square South, Suite 200 • Lansing, Michigan 48933-2138



MARK T. GAFFNEY, *President*

TINA ABBOTT, *Secretary-Treasurer*

May 15, 2007

The Honorable Fred Miller
State Representative
State Capitol
PO Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Dear Representative Miller:

Thank you for your strong support of HB 4533, legislation introduced by Rep. Andy Meisner to restore some balance to the collective bargaining process in public schools. As you know, PA 112, which was enacted in 1994, made a number of changes to the Public Employees Relations Act that adversely singled out those public employees who work for our state's public schools. One of the most extreme changes eliminated the ability of these employees to attempt to address their concerns over the outsourcing of "non-instructional" support services at the bargaining table.

As a matter of fact, this law is even more limiting and unfair than described above. These public employees are even prohibited by law from bargaining over the impact of a decision to outsource jobs they are already performing-- despite the economic impact these decisions may have on their families and themselves. They are not allowed to discuss the reasons the employer is seeking outsourcing, nor are they able to propose their own resolutions to the district's problems, even if they might have creative alternatives. They cannot propose changes in their contracts to address the cost issues that may have been the impetus for outsourcing, even though they might be willing to do so in order to preserve their jobs.

Moreover, there is no guarantee in our state's laws that these unions can be equal participants in any competitive bid process, despite the fact that their bid might resolve a district's financial problems while avoiding the disruption of personnel changes that can affect parents and children. And, finally, there is no legal requirement that school districts must competitively bid for services, no matter how large a sum of money is involved.

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HB 4533 contains no guarantee that districts will not outsource the jobs of current employees to private companies. It only guarantees that local school districts will need to discuss this issue at the bargaining table with the local employees most directly affected by the district's ultimate decision. We support restoring the right to bargain collectively over outsourcing "non-instructional" support services. Fair public policy is good public policy.

Sincerely,



Mark Gaffney, President
Michigan State AFL-CIO



Al Garrett, President
AFSCME Council 25



Phil Schloop, Business Manager
International Union of Operating Engineers
Local 547



Phil Thompson, President
SEIU State Council



Dick Long, Director National CAP
International Union, UAW



David Hecker, President
AFT - Michigan



Jon Geenen, Director
United Steel Workers, Dist. 2



William H. Black, Legislative Dir.
Michigan Teamsters Council 43

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